Thirty-six years ago, Lynn Anderson, shocked the brotherhood by his bold declaration that the church of Christ is "a big sick denomination, . . and I mean every one of those three words, big and sick and denomination." Since then, men like Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, Max Lucado, and Rick Atchley have joined ranks with Lynn Anderson. Their mission is to reconstruct the Lord's church into a full fledged denomination. The one area that has been their focal point is the worship assembly. Old arguments used by the Christian Church in defense of the instrument began to resurface. However the three insurmountable obstacles that liberals have never been able to breach are:

1. Where in the NT. Is instrumental music commanded in Christian worship?
2. Where in the NT. Is there an example of instrumental music being used in Christian worship?
3. Where is the biblical inference that instrumental music was used in Christian worship?

In an effort to set aside these biblical objections, liberals introduced the so-called "New Hermeneutic. Their purpose - to undermine truth, and to usher in the instrument into the assembly. Actually, the so-called "New Hermeneutic" is not new, but has been used by the denominational world in an attempt to justify any and all false doctrines!

Then in the early 1990's, Change Agents took the approach that instrumental music in Christian worship is not a salvation issue. Although this, like all attempts to justify the instrument, is not a new approach, nevertheless it was all liberals needed to usher in the instrument.

In the late 1990's the North Ridge Church of Christ in Mt. Pleasant came out advocating this view. This resulted in the church splitting, and a faithful congregation being established. On Sept.5, 1999 the elders of the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio, along with their minister Max Lucado, announced they would be adding instrumental music to the worship and removed Church of Christ from their sign. On December 3, 2006 the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth announced they would be incorporating mechanical instruments of music in their Saturday evening services as well as Communion.

Texas, of course, is not the only state being infected by this deadly, damnable doctrine (Instrumental music in worship is not a salvation issue). To encourage other congregations to follow, in 2007, Rick Atchley teamed up with Dudley Rutherford "senior pastor" of the Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, California. These men mailed a letter accompanied with a DVD asking brethren to view a sermon "together In God's Grace" by Jeff Walling in which he advocates unity with the Christian Church at the North American Convention in June 2006.

April 13-14, 2007 the Central Church of Christ in Little Rock hosted the 41st Annual Arkansas Christian Convention" - a convention of the Christian Church denomination. Leon Barnes, minister at central spoke twice on "Tearing Down Walls."

Brethren, apostasy is spreading like a ranging prairie fire throughout the brotherhood! Congregations of all sizes are being affected. This issue is not going to go away! Elders and
preachers must once again sound forth the truth regarding the sinfulness of instrumental music in Christian worship! In Ezekiel 22:30, God "sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap..." Three of the saddest words recorded in the Bible conclude this verse, "but I found none."

Without hesitation, nor apology, we affirm that instrumental music in Christian worship is a sin! A sin that unless repented of, will cost brethren their soul salvation! Furthermore, we will not fellowship any congregation that accepts the instrument! Beloved, can God count on YOU to "stand in the gap" and "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3)?

- - -Ivie Powell Rowlet, Texas